

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA



Boards & Commissions

AN APPLICATION GUIDE



Anthony A. Williams
Mayor

A MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR

The District of Columbia has a large number of boards and commissions that offer an excellent opportunity for volunteer services by citizens to citizens of the District.

Each board or commission is an integral component of the District government regardless of its size, or relative degree of sophistication and complexity of issues. Some require more time, attention, and energy than others. But each requires a degree of *service, responsibility and integrity*.

There are advisory boards, policy-making boards, and licensing boards. The members of some boards are appointed directly by the Mayor, and some require confirmation of the Mayor's appointment by the Council of the District of Columbia. I want to ensure that our citizens are assisted and supported in each step through the appointments process, with an extra measure of support for those who must undergo consideration. For most, that process is new and can be intimidating. This guide has been prepared to better inform you about the opportunities for service, and to explain the process.

I value the service that each individual provides through service on the boards and commissions of the District government. The influence felt by the work and decisions of the persons who serve is extensive. It is indeed government by the people in the most fundamental way.

We want to ensure that each participant's board service is indeed a positive and rewarding experience that is beneficial to both them and all District residents. Citizen involvement contributes not only to the success of our government, but to our overall quality of life as well.

I thank you now for taking the initial, and most important, step in the process by expressing interest in and a commitment to dedicated community.

Sincerely,

Anthony A. Williams

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Mayor

GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE APPOINTMENTS PROCESS

APPLICATION

Anyone interested in serving on a board or commission must complete an application Form (OBC Form 8) that is included at the end of this guide. You may also complete and submit a copy of the application form online. Each applicant's file, or request for appointment, is reviewed as boards and commissions are updated. When the application form is submitted, each applicant must also submit a copy of his or her most recent resume.

APPOINTMENTS, WHICH DO NOT REQUIRE CONFIRMATION

The applicant is notified by phone at the time of the Mayor's appointment. Appointees may begin to serve on a board, which does not require confirmation of the Mayor's appointment by the Council of the District of Columbia (Council) upon being sworn-in and the issuance of an official certificate of Mayoral appointment by the Mayor, or on his behalf, by an official in the Office of Boards and Commissions.

APPOINTMENTS, WHICH REQUIRE COUNCIL CONFIRMATION

The Mayor will transmit the name, or names of individuals, to the Council of the District of Columbia in the form of a proposed resolution of confirmation. The proposed resolution is then forwarded to the committee of the Council having jurisdiction for that board or commission which may, or may not decide to schedule and hold a confirmation hearing.

Confirmation hearing: If the Council committee schedules and holds a confirmation hearing, the applicant nominee must attend. Each nominee is expected to prepare a written statement of one to two pages highlighting their qualifications, experience and desire, and interest for serving. On average, the process normally lasts from 15 to 30 minutes. Once the appointment has been approved by the committee, the committee chairman reports the committee's action to the floor Council Committee of Whole for approval by the full Council.

BACKGROUND CHECK:

While the background, education, and employment information provided by each applicant is checked and verified by the staff in the Office of Boards and Commissions, applicants for appointment to some boards and commissions, depending upon the degree of sophistication and complexity of issues that the board confronts, may undergo an extensive background investigation. The background check normally includes an examination of the income tax filing records, complete education background check, employment history check, criminal record check and driving record check, as well as some other aspects of an individual's background. The purpose is not to pry, but to ensure that an applicant's education, employment, and criminal backgrounds are fully verified. This measure prevents any undue embarrassment to the applicant over a fact that he or she may have forgotten, or unintentionally overlooked.

BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS STAFF

Boards and commissions members do not go it alone. Most boards have dedicated employees to perform daily administrative tasks. There are, however, a number of District boards that work within an agency or have access to advice from the agency. If a board works within an agency, certain central support services will usually be made available to the board or commission. The primary function of the agency staff assigned to the board or commission is to carry out the rules, policies, functions, and programs developed, or as directed, by the board or commission. In addition, the staff members notify board members of pertinent issues and legislative activity. They may also arrange meetings, prepare meeting materials, compile background information, and conduct research. The staff also serves as a liaison with other boards, government agencies, and the general public. The staff can be a valuable resource for boards and commissions, and a good staff member can enhance the productivity and effectiveness of a board or commission.

CERTIFICATE OF APPOINTMENT AND OATH ISSUANCE

Appointees may begin to serve on a board or commission which does not require confirmation of the Mayor's appointment by the Council upon being sworn-in and the issuance of an official certificate of Mayoral appointment by the Mayor, or on his behalf, by an official in the Office of Boards and Commissions.

COMPENSATION

In general, the majority of appointees to boards and commissions do not receive compensation. Some appointees may be reimbursed, in accordance with District administrative policies and procedures, for travel and related expenses during the course of their duties. However, there are several boards and commissions where members are compensated for full-time or part-time service in accordance with their organic statute.

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS FOR BOARD SERVICE

Generally, each appointee to a board or commission in the District of Columbia (District) must be committed to providing public service, be a resident of the District, and be a U.S. citizen. There is no requirement that an applicant be a registered voter. Many boards and commissions may have additional requirements, depending upon the Mayor's Order or District statute establishing the board or commission. You may obtain a copy of the OBC Profiles Manual from the Office of Boards and Commissions to obtain specific requirements for a particular board or commission for more information.

INTERVIEWS

Candidates under consideration for appointment may be contacted by a staff member in the Office of Boards and Commissions, usually by phone, to discuss the candidate's interest in serving and to provide the candidate with more information about the board. The candidate would then be scheduled for an interview, or meeting, with Office of Boards and Commissions staff, which could include additional meetings with other District officials.

ROLES & DUTIES OF MEMBERS

PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES OF A BOARD OR COMMISSION MEMBER

District boards and commissions vary in size and complexity. Because board members are in a critical position to shape and influence board decisions and actions, it is important that each member keeps himself or herself informed and up-to-date on issues, legislative activity, and statutes affecting their board or commission.

The important characteristics:

- **SERVICE.** A boards and commissions member desire to serve their fellow citizens is important and commendable. Members have an obligation to provide guidance and advocacy through their tenure of service, and to be fully prepared to discuss and consider issues before the board or commission.
- **RESPONSIBILITY.** A boards and commissions member has an obligation to fully carryout the requirements of his or her appointment through regular attendance at meetings. A member may forfeit his or her position on a board or commission as a result of poor attendance. Regular attendance is essential so that decisions may more truly represent the opinions of the board as a whole. In addition, regular attendance enables board members to keep abreast of board concerns and helps ensure that issues are examined from a variety of perspectives. The bylaws of your board or commission should define attendance requirements.
- **INTEGRITY.** A boards or commissions appointee holds the public's trust, and as such must recognize that the public interest is the top priority. Personal, professional, business, family, or monetary consideration should never interfere with a boards and commissions member's judgment on issues and cases. Remember, your fellow citizens are depending on you.

TYPES OF BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

A boards or commission may be established by Mayor's Order, District statute and rule, or by federal law and regulation. There are three (3) main types of boards:

Advisory Boards. These may be created by the Mayor, the Council, the Courts, or the federal government. The members serve as advisors on policy matters to the appointing authority responsible for administering policy. Advisory boards may study existing policy and make recommendations for changes or implementation. Advisory boards do not have authority to enforce policy or create rules, but their analysis and recommendations can play an important role in furthering the effective operation of the District government. (*Health Services Reform Commission*)

Policy-Making Boards. These boards generally receive their authority by statute. Policies are created through careful analysis and interpretation of legislative intent, as set forth in the statute. Policy-making boards often may serve as governing boards within an agency. The boards may be responsible for directing the agency, approving budgets, creating and implementing agency policy, or appointing the agency director. Members of

these boards have final decision-making authority. (*Examples: Public Housing Authority Commission*)

Regulatory Boards. These boards or commissions may have some of the responsibilities of the advisory and policy boards, depending on the statute or Mayor's Order establishing them. Usually, these boards are created by statute, and perform rule-making or quasi-judicial functions. In fulfilling these functions, the board or commission may operate as a quasi-legislative body, or as a review and appeals body. As an appeals body, regulatory boards hear individual cases and rule on them; board decisions, however, are subject to judicial appeal in either the D. C. Columbia Superior Court or the District of Columbia Court of Appeals. (*Example: Board of Zoning Adjustment, Alcohol Beverage Control Board.*)

Regulatory Boards also have the responsibility to determine the competence of members of a professional or occupational group. The board may examine and license members of occupations to practice in the District, take disciplinary or corrective actions, such as revoking or suspending licenses, in accordance with District law. (*Examples: Board of Medicine, Board of Nursing.*)

HOW TO APPLY

Application Instructions:

- Obtain a copy of Application for Mayoral Appointment to a Board or Commission. (*Available as an attachment to this guide.*)
- Complete the entire application form and sign it. (*Copies of the form are acceptable.*) Applicants must complete the "Declarations" section of the application form. (*False statements included in the "Declarations" section shall constitute grounds to not appoint an individual, or to remove an individual who may be appointed to a board or commission.*)
- Applicants must attach a current Resume or Biography.
- Specifically list the names of the board or commission to which you are applying (multiple selections are allowed). (*Note: Your application cannot be appropriately processed appropriately unless a specific board or commission is listed.*)
- Return the completed application, along with your Resume or Biography, to:

**Director
Office of Boards and Commissions
Executive Office of the Mayor
441 4th Street, N.W., Room 1050-North
Washington, D.C. 20001
(202) 727-1372
(202) 727-2359 (Fax)**

The Application form can also be obtained electronically at <http://www.obc.dc.gov>, or by contacting the Mayor's Office of Boards and Commissions at the telephone number or address shown above.